

Media, PA -- Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-7), attended the Media Youth Center's Arts of March Carnival to support the school in its efforts and also to highlight the importance of after school programs.

"Programs like the Media Youth Center keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families," noted Joe. "I am proud to be here today at their Arts of March Carnival to show support for this worthy organization."

The Media Youth Center, which was founded in 1943 in response to a Halloween prank, provides activities for young men and women in the community. Specifically, it offers basketball programs that are designed to teach boys and girls of all ages and skills the fundamentals of basketball. In 1946, the group became affiliated with the Boys Clubs of America, and it settled into its current location in Media 10 years later. The youth basketball programs run through out the year and include leagues, clinics, camps, tournaments and private lessons.

Programs like this one are important because studies show that more than 14 million school age children are on their own after school. Among them are more than 40,000 kindergarteners. Yet, only 6.5 million K-12 children participate in afterschool programs like the one at Media Youth Center. Research has also shown that the hours between 3p.m. and 6p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex. Teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and they are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and engage in sexual activity.

"I applaud the Media Youth Center for providing a safe haven for the children of our community," added Joe. "We are fortunate that we have this excellent program that enriches the lives of our children and the surrounding community."

In Congress, Congressman Sestak is a member of the Education and Labor Committee, where he has advocated for a high quality education for all students, including afterschool programs. He recently held an education summit to provide an opportunity for education stakeholders in the 7th Congressional district to discuss key educational issues with policy makers and education experts. The event consisted of panel discussions on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Special Education, led by the Honorable George Miller,

Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and the Honorable Terrell Halaska, Assistant Secretary of Education.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.*

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